

WOOL PRODUCTION, QUEENSLAND, 1955-56.

Wool production of Queensland during the twelve months ended 30th June, 1956, was 186,406,000 lb. This total was derived from information from various sources, including annual statistical returns supplied by wool-growers, records of Brisbane wool sales, statistics of oversea and interstate movements of wool, and returns of wool scours and fellmongeries. The total production was made up as follows:- recorded wool clip, 173,565,660 lb.; dead wool, 115,884 lb.; wool recovered by fellmongeries, 4,817,334 lb.; wool exported on skins, 2,489,077 lb.; and a balance (presumably unrecorded clip) of 5,418,045 lb. The unrecorded balance was equal to 2.9 per cent. of the total production. No allowance has been made for this unrecorded balance in the figures which follow in this bulletin for sheep shorn and fleeces produced, but its omission will not significantly affect district and seasonal comparisons.

In spite of a dispute in the shearing industry during 1955-56, the production of 186.4m. lb. of wool was 9.9m. lb., or 5.6 per cent., greater than that of the preceding season. From a comparison of the total sizes of flocks and the numbers shorn it appears that the shearing dispute caused about 1³/₄m. sheep to remain unshorn at the end of the season. These sheep would otherwise have been shorn and produced perhaps another 14m. lb. of wool. The number of sheep and lambs shorn was 20,482,679, which was only 237,768 more than in the previous season although total flocks had risen by nearly 2,000,000.

The quantity of wool produced was nevertheless the greatest since the season ending 30th June, 1944. The curtailment of the number of sheep shorn was more than made up by very high average fleece weights in all parts of the State, the amount of wool cut per sheep or lamb shorn being 8.47 lb. compared with 8.03 lb. in the season 1954-55.

During the early part of the season wool prices continued to fall, and it was only in the later months that price recovery began to appear. As a result, the average price of greasy wool at all Brisbane sales in 1955-56 was only 66.83d. per lb., compared with 72.86d. per lb. in 1954-55. The increased production for 1955-56 was therefore worth only about £51,000,000, compared with £52,109,343 in the earlier year.

Wool Districts.

Six statistical divisions - Downs, Roma, South-Western, Central-Western, Far-Western, and North-Western - produced over 99 per cent. of the State's total wool clip. In the seven statistical divisions of the coast, there is very little wool production. The wool clip in the six wool-producing divisions in each of the last two years is shown below, in comparison with 1942-43 and 1947-48, the seasons of highest and lowest numbers of sheep shorn during recent years.

<u>Statistical Division.</u>	<u>1942-43.</u> <u>Million Lb.</u>	<u>1947-48.</u> <u>Million Lb.</u>	<u>1954-55.</u> <u>Million Lb.</u>	<u>1955-56.</u> <u>Million Lb.</u>
Downs	24.9	18.8	27.1	30.8
Roma	28.9	21.7	29.5	31.3
South-Western ..	39.9	24.8	37.4	37.3
Central-Western ..	51.8	31.5	34.7	36.5
Far-Western ..	25.0	16.0	16.2	18.0
North-Western ..	33.0	23.6	16.7	18.5
Total State ..	204.4	136.8	162.6	173.6

Although sheep flocks in 1955-56 were nearly 2,000,000 greater than in the previous season, the total number of sheep and lambs shorn, 20,482,679, increased by only 237,768, because of the curtailment of shearings by the shearing dispute. All six of the major sheep-raising divisions recorded increased flocks, but while Downs and North-Western Divisions' shearings were nearly in proportion to the larger flocks, the Central-Western and Far-Western Divisions showed much smaller increases in numbers shorn than their flocks would have made possible, while the South-Western and Roma Divisions showed fewer shearings in spite of substantial flock increases.

With the good average fleece weights which were obtained in all divisions, due in part to some over-grown wool, more wool was produced in 1955-56 in each division except the South-Western where the decrease in numbers shorn was specially heavy and the quantity of wool was practically the same as in 1954-55.

The 1955-56 clip was produced in the three main divisions of the State in the following proportions:- South, 57.3 per cent., Central, 32.0 per cent., and North, 10.7 per cent. The three wool-growing divisions of Central-Western, Far-Western, and North-Western which make up the wool areas of Central and North Queensland used to produce a larger proportion of the State's total wool, and until about 1952-53 were losing some of their relative importance to the three Southern divisions - South-Western, Roma, and Downs. Seasonal conditions as well as some movement from sheep- to cattle-raising contributed to this change, but since 1952-53 the Central and Northern Divisions have retained their reduced share of the State's wool production.

Months of Shearing.

Taking the total size of flocks in Queensland into account and using shearing experience of earlier years, it seems that about 1,735,000 sheep which would have otherwise been shorn were not shorn during the twelve months of 1955-56 because of the industrial dispute. These sheep would have yielded about 14m. lb. of wool, much of which will of course become available for the 1956-57 wool sales.

The number of sheep shorn in each of the months of 1955-56 was as follows.

		<u>Sheep and Lambs</u> <u>Shorn, 1955-56.</u>	<u>Estimated Excess (+)</u> <u>or Deficiency (-)</u> <u>from Normal.</u>
July ..	..	2,121,303	-281,000
August ..	..	2,896,224	+2,000
September ..	..	3,384,015	-182,000
October ..	..	1,997,522	-72,000
November ..	..	2,043,184	+545,000
December ..	..	1,184,749	+406,000
January ..	..	261,367	-622,000
February ..	..	430,592	-984,000
March ..	..	1,097,325	-1,421,000
April ..	..	1,430,118	-731,000
May ..	..	1,931,078	+559,000
June ..	..	1,705,202	+1,046,000
Total for Year		<u>20,482,679</u>	<u>-1,735,000</u>

The estimated departures from normal shearing numbers as shown above have been based on the distribution of shearing by months in each of the six main wool-growing divisions during the two years 1953-54 and 1954-55.

It will be seen that after some small delays in shearing during the first four months of the financial year 1955-56, more sheep than usual were shorn in November and December, and the first six months ended with 418,000 more sheep shorn than would have been normally expected. The first four months of 1956 saw continued deficiencies in shearings, March being the worst month. By the end of April, the year's shearings had fallen below normal by 3,340,000 sheep. However, conditions began to improve in May, and June was a very busy month for shearing with over 1,000,000 more shearings than usual, and the year's deficit was reduced to 1,735,000 sheep by the end of June.

S. E. SOLOMON,
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BRISBANE.

26th February, 1957.

Table 1 - Wool Production, Queensland, Ten Years.

Year. ^a	Recorded Wool Clip.			Total Wool Produced. ^c	Value of Wool Production.
	Sheep and Lambs Shorn.	Wool Produced. ^b	Weight per Fleece.		
	No.	Lb. Greasy.	Lb. Greasy.	Lb. Greasy.	£
1946-47 ..	17,807,046	138,231,741	7.76	144,819,591	15,791,369
1947-48 ..	16,832,805	136,780,486	8.13	153,564,000	28,057,000
1948-49 ..	17,156,033	141,378,514	8.24	156,655,000	32,623,000
1949-50 ..	17,182,290	146,428,746	8.52	162,256,000	46,878,000
1950-51 ..	17,800,232	139,537,119	7.84	154,667,000	88,818,000
1951-52 ..	17,522,337	126,894,420	7.24	138,767,000	47,190,000
1952-53 ..	17,326,402	146,771,122	8.47	163,149,000	59,903,000
1953-54 ..	18,611,841	150,738,551	8.10	174,414,000	61,125,000
1954-55 ..	20,244,911	162,646,137	8.03	176,548,000	52,109,000
1955-56 ..	20,482,679	173,565,660	8.47	186,406,000	51,000,000 ^d

^a Twelve months ended 30th June.

^b Including crutchings.

^c Including dead wool, fellmongered wool, wool on skins exported, and an estimate for unrecorded clip.

^d Subject to revision.

Table 2 - Recorded Wool Clip, Queensland, 1955-56.

Statistical Division.	Sheep and Lambs Shorn.	Wool Produced (including Crutchings).		Proportion of Wool Produced in Each Division.	Proportion of Total Sheep in Each Division.
		Total.	Per Sheep.		
	No.	Lb. Greasy.	Lb. Greasy.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Moreton	17,525	105,715	6.03	0.1	0.1
Maryborough ..	4,733	31,318	6.62	0.0	0.0
Downs	3,622,741	30,773,528	8.49	17.7	16.6
Roma	3,600,669	31,310,628	8.70	18.0	16.8
South-Western ..	4,089,159	37,343,031	9.13	21.5	21.8
<u>Total South Q'land</u>	11,334,827	99,564,220	8.78	57.3	55.3
Rockhampton ..	121,853	958,814	7.87	0.5	0.6
Central-Western ..	4,419,132	36,543,158	8.27	21.1	21.5
Far-Western ..	2,103,685	17,994,344	8.55	10.4	10.7
<u>Total Central Q'land</u>	6,644,670	55,496,316	8.55	32.0	32.8
Mackay	1,150	4,308	3.75	0.0	0.0
Townsville ..	276	1,767	6.40	0.0	0.0
Cairns	594	4,188	7.05	0.0	0.0
Peninsula ..	-	-	-	-	-
North-Western ..	2,501,162	18,494,861	7.39	10.7	11.9
<u>Total North Q'land</u>	2,503,182	18,505,124	7.39	10.7	11.9
<u>Total Queensland</u>	20,482,679	173,565,660	8.47	100.0	100.0